



H.R. 1469 – Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007

Floor Situation

H.R. 1469 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) on March 12, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, by voice vote, on March 27, 2007.

H.R. 1469 is expected to be considered on the floor on June 5, 2007.

Summary

H.R. 1469 creates the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation to provide for more than 1 million American undergraduate students to study abroad annually within 10 years of the enactment of this act.

The purposes of this Act are to:

- Significantly enhance the global competitiveness and international knowledge base of the United States by ensuring that more United States students have the opportunity to acquire foreign language skills and international knowledge through significantly expanded study abroad;
- Enhance the foreign policy capacity of the United States by significantly expanding and diversifying the talent pool of individuals with non-traditional foreign language skills and cultural knowledge in the United States who are available for recruitment by United States foreign affairs agencies, legislative branch agencies, and nongovernmental organizations involved in foreign affairs activities;
- Ensure that an increasing portion of study abroad by United States students will take place in nontraditional study abroad destinations such as the People's Republic of China, countries of the Middle East region, and developing countries; and,
- Create greater cultural understanding of the United States by exposing foreign students and their families to United States students in countries that have not traditionally hosted large numbers of United States students.

The bill establishes the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation (“the Foundation”) in the executive branch which will be responsible for carrying out the provisions provided for in this act under the authorities of the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.).

The Foundation will be a government corporation (as defined by 5 U.S.C. 103) and will be governed by a Board of Directors and chaired by the Secretary of State.

The Board of Directors will consist of the Secretaries of State, Education, Defense, and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. These members will serve for the term of their appointment to their position. The Board of Directors will also have 5 additional members with relevant experience in matters relating to study abroad programs who will be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. These members will not receive any additional pay for their service on the Foundation, but they will receive travel expenses and a per diem when traveling on behalf of the Foundation.

H.R. 1469 creates a program, to be administered by the Foundation, which will award grants to the following groups to fulfill its objectives:

- United States students for study abroad;
- Nongovernmental institutions that provide and promote study abroad opportunities for United States students, in consortium with institutions; and,
- Institutions of higher education, individually or in consortium.

The objectives of this program are that, within 10 years of the date of enactment of this Act:

- Not less than one million undergraduate United States students will study abroad annually for credit;
- The demographics of study-abroad participation will reflect the demographics of the United States undergraduate population, including students enrolled in community colleges, minority-serving institutions, and institutions serving large numbers of low-income and first-generation students; and
- An increasing portion of study abroad will take place in nontraditional study abroad destinations, with a substantial portion of such increases taking place in developing countries.

The bill authorizes \$80 million for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year.

Background

According to President George W. Bush, “[A]merica's leadership and national security rest on our commitment to educate and prepare our youth for active engagement in the international community.”

Congress authorized the establishment of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program pursuant to section 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108-199). Pursuant to its mandate, the Lincoln Commission has submitted to Congress and the President a report of its recommendations for greatly expanding the opportunity for students at institutions of higher education in the United States to study abroad, with special emphasis on studying in developing nations. According to the Lincoln Commission, “[s]tudy abroad is one of the major means of producing foreign language speakers and enhancing foreign language learning” and, for that reason, “is simply essential to the [N]ation's security.”

In any given year, only approximately one percent of all students enrolled in United States institutions of higher education study abroad. Less than 10 percent of the students who graduate from United States institutions of higher education with bachelors degrees have studied abroad. Currently, a little over 200,000 American students study overseas every year.

The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The 9/11 Commission Report) recommended that the United States increase support for “scholarship, exchange, and library programs.” The 9/11 Public Discourse Project, successor to the 9/11 Commission, noted in its November 14, 2005, status report that this recommendation was “unfulfilled,” and stated that “[T]he U.S. should increase support for scholarship and exchange programs, our most powerful tool to shape attitudes over the course of a generation.” In its December 5, 2005, Final Report on the 9/11 Commission Recommendations, the 9/11 Public Discourse Project gave the government a grade of ‘D’ for its implementation of this recommendation.

Cost

“CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would cost \$40 million in 2008 and \$345 million over the 2008-2012 period, subject to the appropriation of the authorized amounts.” [Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate](#)

Staff Contact:

For questions or further information contact Chris Vieson at (202) 226-2302.